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ABSTRACT

This digest presents the main elements of a regional seminar held in Sucre, Bolivia, to analyze and assess basic education and literacy programs that have been implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to UNICEF and UNESCO officials, some 36 experts from 11 countries participated in the meeting. Although the initial aim of the seminar was to analyze the progress of the projects which, with the cooperation of UNICEF and UNESCO, were operating in Peru, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, the seminar extended its focus to include basic planning problems related to programing for small children, women, and indigenous populations. Recommendations reaffirmed the need for a dynamic approach from a perspective of ongoing education within the framework of authentic sociocultural contents. The text of the digest provides an analysis of educational problems and strategies to use in addressing the problems, lessons from the experience of projects in the program for Universal Primary Education and Literacy (UPEL), analyses of other innovations in the region, new challenges for the region, and some thoughts on international cooperation. Annex I presents summaries of UPEL projects in Bolivia, Peru, and Nicaragua, while Annex II provides the text of the Declaration of Sucre. The Sucre Declaration sums up the main preoccupations of the participants. (RH)

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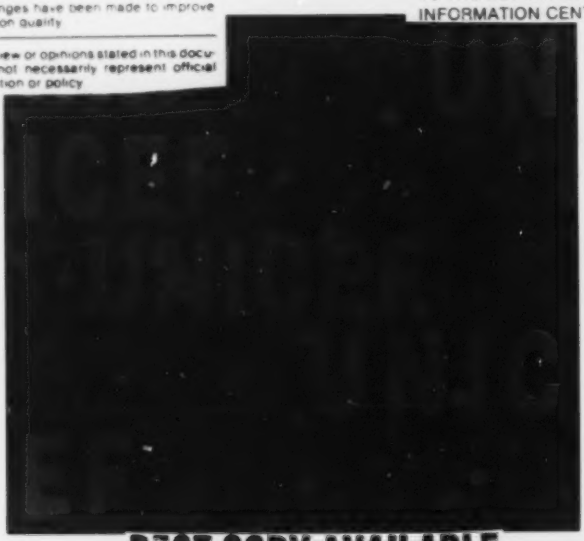

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Digest 24

Meeting the Challenge of Basic Education and Literacy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Highlights of a Unesco/UNICEF
Regional Seminar
on the Universalization of
Primary Education and Literacy

Sucre, Bolivia, 4-10 May 1987

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PREFACE

When in 1983 Unesco and UNICEF launched their joint programme for Universal Primary Education and Literacy (UPEL), it was in Latin America and the Caribbean that the ideas proclaimed were turned most readily into practical action. Nicaragua, Peru, and somewhat later, Bolivia started UPEL projects which received financial and technical assistance from the two Organizations.

Four years later, it was again the Latin American and Caribbean region that called for a review of the lessons learnt. Not surprisingly, UPEL had outgrown the original blueprints, incorporating new elements such as early childhood education, and taking on its own, fairly specific shape in each of the three countries. At the same time, it became clear that UPEL was in fact part of a much larger educational reform movement that brought about many comparable and complementary innovations in other Latin American and Caribbean countries as well. It was decided to review all these together, in a seminar that would bring together educationists from most countries in the region.

If the Unesco/UNICEF Cooperative Programme has decided to feature the report of this Seminar, suitably condensed and translated into English and French*, in its DIGEST Series, it is because we feel the obstacles encountered and educational solutions found in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean should be made known to other regions and countries.

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* The full Spanish version is being jointly published by Unesco's and UNICEF's Regional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean, under the title 'Mirando al futuro del desarrollo humano en America Latina y el Caribe'.

Teresa Albanez and Martha Llanos of UNICEF's Regional Office in Bogota, along with Juan Tedesco and Donald Lemke in the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Santiago, have given their full support to this effort of sharing educational ideas and experiences among different regions. We gratefully acknowledge their help.

Dieter Berstecher
Chief,
Unit for Co-operation
with UNICEF and WFP

Paris, December 1987

I. INTRODUCTION

Half of the children in developing countries today do not have the benefit of a full cycle of primary education. Four out of every ten adults (six women out of ten) can neither read nor write satisfactorily. It has been calculated that there are still 44 million illiterates in Latin America and the Caribbean, and that in 1985 some 8.5 of the 66 million children of school age were not enrolled in school.

It can be said -on the basis of the gross enrolment rate in the region- that, except for four of them, all the region's countries have a formal school network with "capacity" enough to enroll all children of primary school age. However, during the past few years, all efforts to maintain and/or upgrade the quality and coverage of educational services were greatly hampered by budgetary restrictions imposed by the economic crisis.

In 1983, viewing this situation as a challenge for the international community as a whole, and within the framework of their new Programme of Cooperation, UNICEF and Unesco -two United Nations Organizations- initiated a project for Universal Primary Education and Literacy (UPEL) in collaboration with the countries concerned. The strategies were:

a. Create an atmosphere in favour of this action, both nationally and internationally.

b. Ensure access to education for everyone, keep students in school, and maintain a minimum level of learning in primary schools.

c. Eliminate disparities, and help the underprivileged.

d. Reinforce the interaction between the various elements of basic education.

e. Make special headway in literacy and post-literacy programmes.

f. Strengthen the basic services.

g. Mobilize resources and improve the cost/efficiency ratio.

h. Improve planification, management, and research.

These projects were developed independently, yet both U.N. Organizations were able to fit them into the larger scope of their actions: Child Survival and Development Revolution (UNICEF), and Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Unesco).

The UPEL projects were started in six countries between 1983 and 1985: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Peru. In order to do this, these countries developed projects aimed at areas most lacking in terms of health, nutrition, and education. UNICEF obtained voluntary contributions from various countries and promoted the necessary conditions for UPEL to become operational in each country, while Unesco took charge of technical cooperation in the design, formulation, and development of these projects.

After three years of UPEL projects in Latin America, where they underwent various forms of development, in line with varying national peculiarities, considerable progress was made, and tangible results can be noted and evaluated.

In the meantime, in other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, a number of countries met this tremendous social challenge with ,significant innovations -both in the fields of elementary and primary education, and in the field of literacy and adult education-. Having reached this development, the region's creativity and capacity to imagine new solutions to meet this challenge grows by the day.

In order to analyze and assess all those innovative and rich experiences, a Seminar was held in Sucre, as a forum of reflection and dialogue between countries of the area, and the two U.N. Organizations -UNICEF and Unesco.

Some 36 experts, in addition to those of UNICEF and Unesco, from 11 countries, participated in the meeting. The following countries were represented: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

In his opening address, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Bolivia, Dr. Enrique Ipiña Melgar made a pressing appeal for innovative, concerted, and immediate action in favour of the underprivileged masses.

A Steering Committee for the Seminar was elected, composed of:

Chairman:	Ing. Orlando Cossio, Bolivia
Vice-Chairman:	Mrs. María E. Valdiviezo, Peru
Three Rapporteurs:	Mr. Antenor Naspolini, Brazil
	Mrs. Josefina Espinoza, Nicaragua
	Ms. Olga Faucher, Argentina
Secretaries:	Mrs. Martha Llanos, UNICEF
	Mr. Dieter Berstecher, Unesco

The Seminar made an analysis of UPEL experiences in the light of similar educational experiences in other countries. Intensive group work was carried out to identify the most promising strategies for promoting early childhood and primary education, literacy and popular education. Special attention was given to social mobilization, and its part in promoting massive and popular education.

The report hereunder presents the main elements of this meeting: analysis of problems, fundamental ideas and proposals of the meeting, the Sucre Declaration, and short analyses of the papers presented, and of experiences discussed during the Seminar. This report ends with proposals for international cooperation.

In the Annexes are presented summaries of UPEL projects in Bolivia, Peru and Nicaragua (Annex I) and the Declaration of Sucre (Annex II).

The importance of this event must be stressed for it gathered both technicians and policy-making officials around the problems of education in Latin America.

Although the initial object was to analyze the progress of the projects which, with the co-operation of UNICEF and Unesco, are being completed in Peru, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, the Seminar soon went beyond that objective and looked into more basic planning problems concerning small children, women

and indigenous populations; it also made recommendations re-asserting the need for a dynamic approach in the perspective of permanent education within the framework of authentic socio-cultural contents.

The Sucre Declaration sums up the main preoccupations of participants, who noted that health and education are the two sectors most beset by problems, and that the rich human potential of the region is in great danger.

II. THE PROBLEMS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN*

For many years, and even today, some schools of thought believed that developing the countries of the region consisted in improving a number of indicators -especially economic factors-, such as gross national product, balance of payments, balance of exportations, index of inflation, and so on. These are certainly indispensable, and extremely useful and operative in understanding the problems of these countries and the obstacles to their development.

However, while asserting the validity of such systems of analysis, it must be noted that they do not express the full reality of the situation, and that -in order to understand correctly the challenge of development of the region- one must have a comprehensive multidisciplinary view, as well as a fully integrated approach.

This is why, just as we surmise that an educational project can only be implemented when it is integrated into a comprehensive project of national development, we must also assert that development of a nation cannot be conceived without the full development of the human potential of its people.

This premise seems evident: how can a nation attain full development without educating all its human resources who are, in the end, the actors of its development and its "raison d'être"?

It is vital, therefore, that countries of the region identify better, diagnose, and design actions to improve the strategies of child development.

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* Summary of the report presented at the meeting by Dr. Martha Llanos, Regional Adviser on Child Development, UNICEF.

The problems of childhood, analyzed from the standpoint of a general approach, include the execution of larger actions which cover and involve an active integrated process. Improvement cannot be limited to the group of children under six. It must also include all those who interact with the children, i.e. their parents, tutors, brothers and sisters, family, in short, all their social environment. This form of action involves not only education as regards child development, but also political education and mobilization of all sectors pertaining to the leaders of such actions, in order to achieve a more just society whose members are conscious actors and participants, not passive subjects -uprooted and powerless- when faced with economic and political processes which have always undermined their prospects of self-realization and their potentials as human beings.

A short presentation of the global framework of the situation of the child in Latin America will illustrate how all the above factors contributed to the worsening of problems of children in Latin America.

Three main types of influences affecting the well-being of children today were identified:

- First, all the family and community circumstances which determine the physical, social, cultural, and psychological environment of the child. Among these, the parents' education, and more specifically, the mother's, is a factor affecting the child's well-being. Indeed, correct use of the family's and the community's economic resources largely depends on the level of education of the parents, as well as on the knowledge of adequate feeding and child-raising practices.

- Second, the family income -necessary to fulfill food, clothing and housing needs. It is clear that fewer jobs, lower agricultural and other productions induced by the recession, entail immediate deterioration of the family's and the child's well-being.

- Third, public expenditures on social services which come from tax revenues and are generally considerably lower in periods of recession. The reduction of public expenditures is often most acute in the sectors of health, food subsidies, and education.

1. Towards a Comprehensive Notion of Child Development

To help us find objective criteria for a comprehensive notion of child development, a concept that will feed the design and implementation of programmes, let us enumerate some of the more important findings:

a) About half of the children under five years of age in the region present some degree of malnutrition. We know the characteristics of a population at major nutritional risk, and it has been shown that nutritional complements taken separately have relatively little impact on the prevention of denutrition. Thus gastro-intestinal related diseases are an important causal factor in the determination of nutritional problems.

b) Nutrition risks begin in the mother's womb. That is why, as a preventive measure, it is imperative that the diet of pregnant women be improved. It has also been demonstrated that denutrition is a social ill, along with other deficiencies, especially in education, prejudices, and attitudes. It is necessary, therefore, to undertake a multi-disciplinary and inter-sectorial action.

c) It was shown that adult-child interaction and emotional development in the treatment of children suffering from denutrition and born prematurely were able not only to prevent and catch up with the delay in their development, but also made it easier for the children to recover generally. This finding can easily be applied in re-designing conventional nutritional recuperation and premature-birth wards.

d) Nutritional levels are directly linked to family income, which depends on job opportunities. High ratios of unemployment correspond to equally high ratios of denutrition.

e) The migration of the father in search of work entails partial or complete abandon of the mother and children. The mother is thus left alone to face the double responsibility of providing economic support, and of satisfying, in the home, the needs of younger members of the family.

f) Family disintegration deprives children of the presence, affection, and security that should be provided by the parents.

g) Migratory phenomena and accelerating urbanization incite many families to leave rural areas in the hope of finding better living conditions in the cities. The illusion quickly disappears in the face of the harsh reality of slums, unemployment, overcrowding, insecurity, and is replaced by feelings of frustration and uprooting.

h) Millions of children under 14 survive in the streets by devices such as selling newspapers, shoe-shining, or entering the world of delinquency. Those are children who either dropped out, or never attended school.

i) Latin American families, whether rural or urban, play an essential role in transmitting social values, in production processes, in the education and care of children, and also, in every activity pertaining to social development. However, family life is adversely affected by various conditions stemming from the region's particular situation. All the variations of the global atmosphere of society converge upon the family.

j) Some patterns of child-raising, of attitudes and behaviour of parents are sometimes noxious to child development and growth. However, we also know that inadequate generalizations must not be made, because we must respect the cultural variety of the communities.

k) Early education can, and must, be a cultural heritage for the family and community, and not necessarily a sophisticated and costly technique based on schooling. This explains the increasing interest shown by communities, and the efforts made by populations in favour of programmes directed to small children, with the result that at least 20% of all 3 to 5 year old children receive some kind of attention.

l) It has been shown that the effects of interventions in the fields of health, nutrition, and early stimulations are proportional to their duration and tend to disappear with time, especially when they do not involve community

life dynamics. They are most effective when they draw on the capacities of natural social institutions (families, youth groups, schools, and so on).

m) We know that non-professional staff -coming from the communities themselves- can be trained as educational agents to promote the development of their own communities. We know how efficient they are, and how great their motivation is. We have noted their extraordinary motivation, especially in the search for solutions to their innumerable problems, and for the various approaches to community work.

n) It has been established that increasingly, when both parents work, programmes exclusively directed at the mother as stimulating agent seem to conflict with her rare moments of interaction with her children at home, and with her low level of literacy. On the other hand, at least in some countries, older brothers and sisters have been identified as the agents in charge, and as potential agents of education within the family.

This list could be endless. However, we only wanted to show that we have all the basic information to be taken into account when planning and implementing strategies of intervention. Indeed, the challenge here is to integrate this knowledge to define approaches that will effectively and durably affect the living conditions of children.

In order to fully understand child development, it must be seen as a "process" and as a "system". The notion of process emphasizes its changing character: it is an evolutionary progress to higher and more complex levels of organization. The notion of system refers to the necessity for interactions between different sub-systems, their interdependence, and mutual influences.

We must remember that the problem is not to deny the importance of specific actions aimed at improving one area or process, but to relativize their effectiveness, so as not to mistake full development for its specific indicators. This view, in addition to being more realistic, gives the balance of actions to be undertaken and warns us against immoderate expectations, such as claiming to improve

intellectual development through sporadic exercises, or to lower mortality rates through a vaccination campaign without taking into account other aspects related to general sanitation and provision of services.

It is thus necessary to have a comprehensive approach of development, which systematically takes into consideration the child and its environment.

As far as the child is concerned, this view implies that a child must be considered as a person whose needs include each and every one of the biological, psychological and social sub-systems, not as isolated but as constantly interacting elements. Therefore, not only the child's basic needs for adequate feeding and health must be satisfied, but the harmonious development of its personality must also be provided for.

Educational actions cannot be limited to facilitating cognitive or perception processes. It is also essential to take into account the processes of socialization, expression of feelings, communication and creative abilities, as well as interests and motivations corresponding to the child's age and development level.

Implementation of any action aimed at promoting full development must start with recognizing that human beings do not simply respond to stimuli -which must be interpreted in relation to their interests and expectations. The impact of stimulating situations is mitigated by meaning which is an emotional connotation, always present in all our interactions with the world of objects and persons.

This is perhaps why one of the main mistakes of early stimulation in manuals was to conceive socialization as a unidirectional process, prescribed from afar by the stimulating agent, in complete disregard of the child's capacity to emulate and preserve the adult's social behaviour, and of the child's own motivations to act and experiment in its environment.

All the massive communication methods must be more effectively and more systematically put to use, given the important part they play in transmitting culture in Latin America.

Systematic conceptualization of the physical and socio-cultural environment implies that all the spaces and times shared by people are recognized as opportunities to learn, and that the child's environment cannot be reduced to the material and emotional circle of family life, to be later extended to formal school institutions. On the contrary, children are immersed in a changing system of numerous relationships which make up their vital space. That is why it is not enough -when trying to obtain a general view of child care programmes- to act on the restricted circle of parents or immediate caregivers. It is also necessary to act massively on society at large, to arouse collective consciousness for the respect and implementation of children's rights, for children to be recognized as persons in the process of learning, who have their own logic in their vision of the world, and with their own needs and expectations which are different from the adults'.

2. The Role of Education in Child Development

Education must be integrated as the central pillar of all social transformation. In education, knowledge must not only aim at transforming pedagogic practices, but also vindicate the conditions of children, youngsters, and education agents in general.

The life-long education approach helped understand education as a process that develops throughout a person's life, in various places and through different processes, stimulating or allowing spontaneous or programmed learning, consciously or not. This is why education can be said to be a daily and never-ending process which begins at birth. It derives from the human capacity to always learn, in all situations of life.

In this perspective, the importance of education in the early years of life must be noted because of its decisive impact in the development of all the potentialities of a human being.

As for formal - pre-school and primary - education, it must be stressed that they are extremely poor in Latin America: repeating grades and dropping out from school, and the little

aid given to pre-school education may, for example, be mainly due to the lack of information on the relation between access to pre-school education and the increase or fall of school drop-out rates. We must emphasize the fact that the political exclusion of pre-school education programmes can induce a large drop in the creative and change inducing human potential of Latin America. Finally, it must be stressed that only 20% of the over 30 million children 0 to 6 years of age, living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, receive any kind of pre-school attention.

One of the tasks to be undertaken now is to reformulate the position taken by planners in relation to early childhood education. Indeed, despite its growth, primary education of the region suffers from many defects and we believe these can be corrected if attention is shifted to pre-school age children and to early childhood education.

It must be noted, therefore, that educational efforts cannot but be one of the essential aspects of a comprehensive policy directed against poverty. When adequately integrated into a policy of economic development, education - either formal or non-formal - can become an important contributor to the fight against poverty. Indeed, consider for example an economy chronically beset by constant problems of unemployment and of unproductive use of labour. It is clear that the poverty thus generated cannot be solved only through education policies. There must be a policy of development which makes the economy grow and stretch labour requirements to reach conditions favourable to the eradication of poverty.

On the other hand, there is the situation of under-developed agricultural economies where the whole population faces a situation of poverty. In such a case, it is also clear that education is but a part -necessary as it is- of a comprehensive policy of development.

3. Articulation between Formal and Non-formal Education

We now examine the theme of the articulation between formal and non-formal education, supposing that educational efforts develop in a context favourable to the eradication of poverty.

Discussions on this theme have led to a general conviction that formal and non-formal education must be conceived as mutually complementary. Non-formal programmes must be completed by establishing and developing links with formal education. On the other hand, formal programmes, methods, and organization must be more flexible, and non-formal whenever possible. If there is no mutual move to draw together, a dichotomy will develop between these two educational approaches. The main danger is that two educational systems of different quality and prestige will develop, and thus contribute to perpetuating and increasing the existing socio-economic disparities.

In any case, non-formal programmes must be given institutional aid if they are to reach the large scope required. This must be done while maintaining their non-formal character, for that is perhaps where rests the best of their potential. The question is, therefore, to face the dilemma of institutionalizing programmes of non-formal education with enough creativity and flexibility to avoid their becoming "schools". Institutional aid must be understood to be a way to amplify and improve the effects of distinct experiments, without limiting the initiative, autonomy and levels of local participation obtained. Non-formal education programmes must not become formal, by adopting formal schedules, requirements, administrative rules and procedures. On the contrary, their development must be aided without wanting to assimilate them to the rest of the educational system.

States can assist non-formal programmes in various ways, providing financial and technical assistance, capable human resources, methodology, infrastructures and administration. None of these require that the States centralize or standardize programmes normatively.

III. STRATEGIES TO FACE THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS IN THE REGION

The participants analysed extensively the perspectives of full development for children, youngsters and adults within the framework of UPEL projects. This analysis -presented hereunder- was made with regard to various levels (early childhood and primary education, literacy and adult education) and examined in each case, the following points:

- General problems
- Progress made
- Requirements for a situation analysis
- Specific problems pertaining to each level
- Alternative strategies

1. Early Childhood Education

1.1 General Problems

In Latin America and the Caribbean today, approximately 50% of children under 6 show some degree of malnutrition. In the population running major malnutrition risks, it has been shown that isolated nutritional complements have relatively little impact on the prevention of malnutrition. It has also been ascertained that nutritional risks begin at the intra-uterine stage and that, therefore, diets of pregnant women must be improved as a preventive measure.

Gastro-intestinal related illnesses are also, to some measure, a major cause of infant mortality and an important etiological factor in the determination of nutritional problems. Another cause of infant mortality are acute respiratory infections which affect more than 40% of children under 6.

Despite massive vaccination campaigns, infant mortality rates related to the above causes are especially high for girls, due to social and cultural factors deeply rooted in many countries.

Health services destined to children under 6 stem from curative rather than preventive approaches, and are rather limited in their coverage, being concentrated around health centres and urban areas. Democratization of health services is still to be found more in words than in action.

Some of the conclusions the Seminar arrived at, concerning the situation of children under 6 and their families and community life were:

- Lack of an effective child-adult interaction, due to child neglect on the part of working parents.

- Low family incomes and few opportunities for work or other productive activities have a negative impact on child survival and development.

- A large number of children have physical or psychological handicaps and, because of them, suffer most from the lack of adequate policies of child-care.

- Migratory phenomena create poverty belts around the cities, thus provoking insecurity and frustrations within the family nucleus, and this reflect on the attention given to children.

- In general, in most Latin American countries, no emphasis is given to early childhood education. Budgets allocated are restricted, and existing educational units revolve around urban -not rural or marginal- areas. State efforts are also limited, and the proliferation of private services does not solve the social problem. This problem arises not only from the lack of policies of child care, but also from the inefficient implementation of the legal measures taken by each country.

- This is why curriculum contents concerning the attention to be given to children under 6 are poor, both in the health and in the educational sectors.

- In most cases, actions in favour of small children take neither family nor community participations into account, and thus restrict yet further the existing low coverage.

- Even today, appropriate methodologies in favour of vernacular-speaking native children are not being considered. This leads to the abandon of positive child-raising patterns in favour of imposed foreign models.

1.2 Progress made

However, in the past few years, despite the fact that early childhood education in Latin America is still poorly provided for as compared to the other levels, and despite the fact that its implementation and concept vary from one country to another while maintaining the old "preparation for school" approach, a greater interest in child development has been observed in recent years, compared with the seriousness of the situation, efforts are still limited, and it is still believed that early childhood education is costly.

Today, and as a consequence of various factors, including the economic crisis, Latin American and Caribbean countries have developed innovative alternatives derived from a more comprehensive approach where child care is to start at birth in an all-round manner (health, nutrition, and education). In the field of non-formal education especially, a series of alternatives are being developed in the region, some extensive and institutionalized, some some experimental. The fundamental characteristic of all these alternatives is the participation of the community in the implementation of programmes, and the articulation with other sectors, especially the health sector.

Community participation is apparent in the implementation and organization of programmes, either in the choice of community agents themselves (community educators, promoters, animators, animating parents or "yanapac mamas"*, and others...), or in promoting and maintaining premises, basic communal equipments and recreational spaces.

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* In quetchua, yanapai/yanamai = to care, to help.

All the above show a real sense of mutual responsibility in the process.

The differences between the various programmes of this kind reside in:

- Maturity of experiments: this contributes in some cases to their being formalized.

- Rate of development in relation to the formal system (in some countries, this rate is 20%, in others 60%).

- Type of programme: visits to the homes, contact with mothers, with groups of children, through centres.

- Agents: mothers, fathers, older brothers and sisters, students (secondary or higher education levels), and members of organizations.

- Organization: basic centres with 3 classrooms, with 1 classroom, or itinerant with no classrooms. Functioning 8 or 4 hours a day; temporary (itinerant) or permanent (in the family); supervised by the teaching staff or by the more experienced members of the community.

- Qualification: all had previous qualifications, though with different models and time distributions: centralized or decentralized, intensive or permanent, using various methods, means and teaching materials.

In short, it seems that the countries of the region understand better that it is necessary and profitable for the individual and for the society to take care of all the aspects of a child's personality from the earliest age; that innovative actions implemented on a limited scale to this end prove to be pertinent and effective, and also, that early childhood education must be extended since it is a vital component in the success of any project for the democratization of education.

However, greater awareness and interest must lead to more intensive and visible actions on the part of the countries of the region, to help develop innovative experiments and to integrate into national education policies and plans the -as yet little integrated- objectives and goals of early childhood development.

1.3 Requirements for a Situation Analysis of Early Childhood Education

In many of the region's countries, there is a tendency to diagnose the situation of children under 6 in relation to generally school-related indicators, as if the situation of the 0-6 age group depended on the school sphere. This derives from the idea that children need attention only to prepare them for school, not for life. And indeed, in most countries, this attention is limited to the 5 year olds.

Development psychology and biology have evidenced deep and decisive transformations inherent in the process of child development during the early years. They also show clearly how rapidly this process takes place, with distinct attainments and precise stages.

These data are well-known and acknowledged. However, they are not taken into account in situation analyses, nor are they applied in the elaboration of analytical instruments which would be specific and distinct from those of schooling. Such a tendency may also be observed in the programmes of early health care. In general, collected data do not consider the above mentioned early achievements and development stages of the child. That is to say, sometimes they do not seem to realize the differences peculiar to each group of children. This is very dangerous, especially in the light of the fact that "everything is settled before a child is 6", both in terms of education and in terms of early health care.

This information deficiency usually comes out later in the formulation of inadequate strategies due to lack of sufficient information. It must also be noted that the above analyses often include intersectoral data which do not specify which population attends which sector, with the risk of duplicating efforts destined to the same population.

A series of recommendations were drawn up with the help of experts present at the Seminar, for the improvement of situation analyses. They are summarized below:

- Statistical work must be based on age groups corresponding to the achievements and stages of this decisive period of development.

- Macro-analysis must be articulated with micro-levels, for numerous experiences show that the former often do not take the latter into account.

- Situation analysis must include indicators and variables which can express more pertinently the quality of life of the child population, showing the importance of measuring averages, per age group and per area.

- It was also noted how important it is to include the traditional patterns of child-raising, psycho-motor development, development of capacities of expression and of ludic activities; as well as an analysis of context, taking into account such indicators as access to basic services, composition of the diet, and communication in rural cases, along with an analysis of territorial context and of cultural patterns.

- In collecting information, participative investigation must be included as an essential element, not only for the quality of information thus obtained, but also for the room they give to participation within a democratic perspective of action-research. This does not mean that academic investigations and application of social statistical techniques must be abandoned, only that the limits of exclusively quantitative variables must be recognized.

- Information obtained in all cases must be considered as a backdrop to ethnographic, linguistic, and anthropological aspects.

- Indicators that cannot always be measured mathematically must also be considered, such as the parents' expectations, self-representation, child-raising patterns, family structures and compositions, and so on...

More particularly, we must try and understand the context of communication/education of the population due to the power of means of mass communication. It is necessary to know what kind of information the parents or children receive, within the context of a global analysis of the communication component, be it formal or non-formal.

It was suggested that surveys be made to extrapolate on all the above mentioned aspects. In this sense, it is also necessary to adopt a system of classification of relevant indicators, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Finally, as regards the way communities could establish their needs and priorities in the education of the 0-6 pre-school age group, we think it necessary to renew the characteristic experience of democratic processes in various countries of the region, generated through popular vote, community pedagogic assemblies, and other forms of democratic participation.

Mechanisms of democratic participation should, in other words, be installed which take the population as co-subject of external and institutional operators in all aspects of the process, from analysis of the situation to implementation of programmes.

This is also necessary in the light of reasons that are presented hereunder, for in situation analyses the data need to be disaggregated by age and sex.

1.4 Problems of Girls and Women in Early Childhood Education

In Latin America and the Caribbean, young girls and women are permanently in a backward situation. This is reflected in the difference of treatment they receive in the family, and from the mother herself, who gives greater attention to male members of the family while the girl is marginalized both in nutrition and in educational opportunities. This is reflected, among other things, in higher rates of malnutrition and illiteracy for the girls.

This situation is worsened by the fact that maternity comes ever earlier, and the age gap between children is narrower. Children have, therefore, lower birth weights and later on, problems of development. The fact that women work implies their abandoning their children and delegating the responsibilities not only for the youngest child but also for the older ones.

This behaviour is observed both in the family and in education. Thus, despite the fact that in the various countries curriculum planning for early childhood education tries to avoid discrimination in all its forms, in practice and in most cases the same standards of subordination still apply to girls, keeping them from a number of activities considered as inherently reserved for boys.

Alternatives examined in the UPEL Seminar included programmes for the promotion and organization of women, as an innovative tendency in the field of early childhood education, which stresses women's value in family life, and consider them as both recipients and generative elements of actions benefitting others as well as themselves. In the search for alternatives for full child-care, women are a central element of early education programmes.

The Seminar also recommended the following:

- Early childhood education personnel must be aware that this stage is decisive for both children and parents if they are to internalize the fact that rights and obligations are the same for men and for women, and the final aim of education is development of human beings without any distinction of sex.

- Co-education is one of the most efficient means of generating an egalitarian and symetrical relationship which allows for personal growth while respecting each person's biological characteristics.

- Education given to girls and boys must be accompanied by educational programmes directed at families and communities so that they support the educational processes underway.

- It is not only necessary to consider both traditional education agents like the teachers and non-traditional ones like promoters, child minders or others, but great emphasis must be attached to family participation in the educational process, to strengthen one of the basic and most important functions of the institution 'family': education.

- One of the aspects which must be reconsidered is the qualification of education agents. Educational methodologies must be found capable of generating actions which are in line with reality.

- Programmes involving women must promote the organization of women, enabling them to act -according to their needs- in a conscious and responsible manner, both for their own achievement as women and for the development of their families and communities. To do this, these programmes must be articulated with literacy processes, with support for the creation of small enterprises, and with actions in favour of communities, taking into account the reality of the children's and families' life.

- The self-image and perception women have of themselves as regards the above are essential. This is why what early childhood and primary educations generate during the early years in terms of self-confidence and participation in decision-making will have weight in a woman's life and be reflected as much in her relationship with her husband as in her relationships with her children and with the community at large.

1.5 Alternative Formal and Non-formal Strategies

In spite of all the efforts made in the region for increasing attention to pre-school age children through programmes involving mothers and communities, this is still not done on a large scale, and extending them faces some important problems, especially as regards the qualification of personnel, the available infrastructures and their equipment.

The earliest experiments show a tendency towards formalization reflected in stable hours of schooling, formalized curricula and organizations. This happens especially when pilot projects are taken over by the government.

On the other hand, mixed forms are being experimented, with direct participation of teaching staffs and of volunteers in programmes which operate both in centres and in the homes.

It is important, therefore, to stress that formal and non-formal systems do not preclude one another, they are complementary. In order to draw the greatest benefit from the progress of both systems, they must be complementary.

In some countries, an effort has been made to introduce into curricula of formal primary and secondary education the contents of early childhood education and of institutions which train teachers for non-formal education. This shows that these activities can be integrated.

In the same way, many programmes and projects use simple communication means and show their possibilities and potentials to sensitize, diffuse, and democratize -in the same perspective of articulation and complementarity.

Given the existing alternatives, it is the group of under-3-year olds which most lack attention. In this sense, the most viable option would be to take advantage of existing spaces in all services, not only in the sector of education, to teach parents to read and write. These could be:

- Health centres, medical stations, maternity wards;
- Organized groups of women, mothers' clubs;
- Institutions, or services of child nutrition, where are given, for example, milk, "la galleta"*, and other food supplements.

Programmes of full attention to children under 3 may be introduced into all the above, based on the view that child development depends on numerous factors related not only to health, nutrition and stimulation, but also to family life, neighbour relationships, family planning, family rights and duties, intervention in community life, and others, according to local needs.

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* Galleta is a square, salted or sweet, wheat biscuit.

It is recommended, therefore:

- To stimulate the participation of students, at primary, secondary and higher levels, according to their possibilities, in non-formal early childhood education activities, both to enlarge services, and to sensitize children and youths to social service in favour of their communities.

- To revise curricula in higher education, pediatrics, nursing studies, nutrition, social work, and to introduce contents related to infant survival and child development, in order to facilitate the above mentioned actions.

- To promote child-care programmes within literacy programmes, and to introduce notions of survival and development into literacy and post-literacy programmes and materials.

- To use methods and media of popular participation such as animation activities, drama, popular theatre, puppets, celebrations, thematic forums, marches, and so on... These methods must be used to trigger social mobilization, to prepare mass development, and to promote coordination between institutions.

- To set up educational resource and training centres as dynamic elements which would, at the same time, gather all local information, promote the production of materials for mutual training and curriculum support, and prepare educational materials for children.

2. Primary Education

2.1 General Problems

Undoubtedly, one of the most widespread and alarming phenomena in education in the region is the considerable increase in repeaters and drop-outs registered in primary education.

From the point of view of UPEL projects in the region and of the Major Educational Project for Latin America and the Caribbean, repeating and dropping out seriously endanger universalization of primary education, improvement of educational quality, and eradication of illiteracy before the year 2000.

Though efforts made by the various Latin American and Caribbean countries opened opportunities in primary education, in 1985 there was still 8.5 million young children (13% of the school-age bracket) who had no access to the educational system. Only 6 out of 23 countries have provided education for all of their children, and in 5 countries this is about to be achieved. In 1985 also, the average school enrolment ratio was approximately 70% of the school-age population, many countries reaching barely a 54% rate.

As regards grade repetition, the situation is no better than in 1975. In 1983, 14.5% of enrolled students were repeaters. Many of them account for the 74% of students who, once in the school system, barely make it up to the fourth grade of primary education.

Even if the general democratization process in the region during the past few years has made considerable progress which resulted in a significant increase in the education sector's budget, it is nevertheless true that economic recession has made this progress seem relatively small given the deterioration of available resources.

This context entails a vital priority: urgently adopt plans and strategies to reverse the ratios of repetition and drop out in primary education. Indeed, these ratios show, without a doubt, that the problem may spread to other levels of the educational system.

However, it is difficult to adopt adequate measures without first making an appropriate appraisal of the reasons underlying this phenomenon.

The majority of repeaters or drop-outs belong to poor, rural and marginal urban families where the jobs of both parents are not sufficient to ensure a minimum improvement of survival conditions (and clearly not education needs).

In many cases, the children's part of the family budget is reduced to the point that children themselves must contribute to the family's income.

Educational consequences of the economic crisis on the children's lives may be foreseen, such as: high rates of absenteeism -often because the children work; stress situations due to malnutrition, and often associated with illnesses that hamper their productivity; incapacity to achieve minimum school requirements. All these elements create by themselves a situation of inequality and of high risks, and considerably increase the likelihood of having to repeat.

Finally, when this happens, and because of the educational failure, self-esteem is badly hurt, and conditions for dropping out are created.

This description does not account for all cases but it is an example that should help reflect on the relationships between recession - critical poverty - lowering of school achievements - grade repetition - dropping out.

The seriousness of the situation demands that other elements leading to repetition and drop-out in primary education be considered:

School systems tend to be obsolete in terms of contents, methods and educational agents -usually out of touch with the reality faced by families living in conditions of critical poverty and marginality. Recession-induced deterioration of school systems must also be taken into account -inadequate infrastructures, scarcity of equipments, desertion of educational agents, and so on- for these factors contribute to increasing the already high rates of repetition and drop-out.

All this results, in the end, in a complete rupture between school and community, between teachers and students, or, in other words, between the schools' educational mission and the poor families' urgent problems of survival.

However,in order to get a complete picture of repetition and drop-out, cultural and linguistic factors related to indigenous ethnic populations -one of the region's undeniable realities- must be taken into account.

In this respect, it must be admitted that educational efforts directed towards the cultural, linguistic and social needs of these populations have only just started, especially as regards the implementation of bilingual inter-cultural programmes. The right of native children to live, to fully develop as persons, and to thrive within their own culture, must become reality in their schools. But this is still a distant hope given the fact that their vernacular languages -essential vehicles of their culture and way of thinking- are yet to be officially recognized. In their case, repeating a grade and dropping out are not due only to poverty and to the rigidity of school systems. They are also a legitimate expression of cultural self-defence.

In sum, it is imperative to achieve greater educational efficiency, quality, outreach, flexibility, and better school retention rates within the current context of economic crisis and recession.

2.2 Progress made

The rich exchanges during the Seminar showed that some answers to planning issues are already emerging, offering alternatives, giving glimpses of new options, and showing a number of new tendencies, such as:

- As regards coverage, efforts are directed towards:

  . Maintaining what was achieved: especially in Nicaragua where the social, political, and economic situation is integrated into a "National Survival" strategy*.

  . Maximizing existing educational resources: especially in rural areas, multi-grade teaching methods have been developed in Colombia, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, seeking to offer the five primary grades in schools with fewer pupils and only one or two teachers.

- As regards improvement of quality, several countries mentioned very concrete actions. All evince the spirit of an education integrated into their socio-economic, political, and cultural milieus.

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* For a description of projects mentioned, see Annex I.

- There are also clear indications of:

  . More participative and better adapted planning methods which involve consultation of teaching staff (Cordoba, Argentina); micro-planning (Nicaragua), acknowledgment of inter-cultural and bilingual realities (Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua); acknowledging rural problems, and systemizing solutions (Colombia).

  . New, adapted, and more relevant curricula, enriched by gearing them to the milieu and to the country's development goals, with the possibility of adapting them to specific populations (rural, marginal urban, or urban), and to various contexts (national, regional, local).

  . Innovative methods which may entail a more democratic teacher-student relationship; flexible promotion which respects the learner's own rhythm, thanks to more personalized teaching methods; better access to educational resources and materials, for teachers as well as for pupils and the community (libraries, endowments of manuals and school textbooks, resource centres).

  . Teaching agents, who become "partners" in planning, working in a decentralized manner in accordance with local requirements, and using active methods to promote attitudinal changes.

  . Schools which interact more closely with the community: this also leads to better interaction between formal school education and permanent education or education for life. The UPEL projects evidenced a clear interaction between early childhood education, primary education, and adult literacy classes. The same objective underlies the project initiated in Cordoba, Argentina, with its consulting workshops, inter-sectoral coordination, and redeeming of cultural values. Colombia shows how, in answer to the issue of child survival and development, this theme was integrated into the curricula of primary and secondary education, in teacher training and in higher education, as well as in social services for students.

. Efforts to prevent school failure: in this respect, the case of Cordoba, Argentina, was presented at the Seminar. Reasons for school failure being multiple, a multi-disciplinary strategy was suggested, operating through educational support centres which provide for medical, psychological, psycho-pedagogic, audio-phonetic, and social welfare services -thus dealing with the causes in an inter-disciplinary manner.

2.3 Requirements for a Situation Analysis of Primary Education

In general, situation analyses of primary education use census data or other statistical sources which do not yield an accurate picture because they do not integrate quantitative with qualitative aspects. It must be stressed that situation analysis is not a preliminary stage independent from the implementation stage of a programme. It must be seen as a "process" involving diversified actions.

This means taking into account channels of communication and inter-institutional relationships existing between the parties involved in programme formulation (national and international organizations, beneficiary populations, regional and local authorities).

Situation analysis becomes thus an association model apt to help in ensuring political viability of programmes, and in gathering more reliable information to increase general technical solvency.

Situation analysis should start with previously gathered data, in order to establish a preliminary diagnosis which will allow micro-analysis of the situation, involving all participants in the association model.

Viewed in this way, situation analysis rests on successfully implemented experiments in the region. The Cordoba, Argentina Project, and the experiment 'Pro-Crianza' carried out by the State of Santa Catarina in Brazil, show that when situation analysis is taken as a process, it yields major results in implementing educational programmes. The following indicators must be considered: communities

(composition, residence, physical conditions, labour market, existence of natural resources, history); inhabitants (social classes, age and sex distribution of the population, languages, and so on); occupations (in the formal or informal sectors of the economy for adults and for minors); administrative organization; sanitary, and living conditions; cultural and recreational activities; social institutions; contacts and conflicts between families and communities, and so on...

Given the peculiarities of each country of the region, it may also be necessary to check data on the ecology, on economic activities, migratory processes, climatic cycles, and more specifically, any indicators which would facilitate the integration of the child health and survival strategy into the educational system. Socio-linguistic and anthropological instruments should be used to achieve this.

2.4 Alternative Formal and Non-formal Strategies

Based on the earlier discussion of problems in primary education, the following alternatives were suggested with a view to keeping more children in school as well as improving pedagogy and didactics:

- Programmes of supplementary feeding and basic care should be encouraged, and more flexibility should be allowed in terms of school requisites -not requiring school uniforms or shoes from children who do not possess any. This must be accompanied by measures permitting such items to be sold cheaper.

- Curricula should correspond to the children's characters and needs in their relationship with the environment, along with more active teaching methods and more interesting materials. This would help reduce school failure and rejection by the system.

- The above proposal implies that teaching staff be trained to work with marginal or rural populations. Programmes of teacher training and teaching practice must, therefore, be revised. Students in their last years of training should do field work amongst these populations.

- Available facilities should be used alternatively by different parts of the community, with an adequate dosage of useful activities, to occupy the community's leisure hours: elaboration of materials for small children, participation in health or tree-planting campaigns, gardening, vocational production activities for young people.

- Curricular objectives should be better adapted to children, and special attention should be given to each child's own rhythm of work. This may involve longer periods of preparation, and learning to read and write up into the second grade. This measure will prevent school failure in the first grades and expulsion of children who are slow to learn.

- In urban areas, out-of-school programmes should be launched for street children or working children, with flexible schedules, adapted curricula, and active methodologies to stimulate their interest and keep them attending the programme.

- In rural areas, the agricultural calendar should provide the basis for using children's participation in agricultural production activities in the family and community as learning sources; bilingual and inter-cultural education methodologies should be strengthened; multi-grade teaching methods need to be strengthened by preparing teaching staff through pre- and in-service training in the use of these methods; finally, the school should be turned into a dynamizing centre for the community.

Experiments to offer primary education through mass communication have been started in Latin America. A concrete application of this is primary education by television in Lima, Peru, conceived as an alternative for the extension of educational coverage. The results should be studied in depth, with continuity, and compared to results obtained in other regions applying this method. It is to be noted that in Mexico, primary education by television is also applied as a support strategy for teachers, bringing better quality.

As regards non-formal methodologies and activities which might complement formal school education, the following may be suggested:

. Popular theatre,

. Community service activities,

. Activities to be held jointly with popular organizations (unions, churches, neighbourhood groups, sports clubs, and so on),

. Obtain the assistance of non-governmental organizations, especially of those dedicated to popular education, in school improvement activities.

2.5 Transition from Early Childhood to Primary Education

The Seminar paid particular attention to the transition from early childhood to primary education. Relevant problems in this domain are as follows:

- Large numbers of children live in marginal conditions, and come to school without having acquired the necessary abilities to learn how to read and write.

- Educational programmes are all too often foreign to local and regional needs.

- There exists no relationship whatsoever between the methodologies used in early childhood as against primary education. One of the causes of school failure is that first grades completely lack systematic learning activities.

- Teaching staff tends to be largely ignorant of mental development processes, of learning psychology, and other aspects related to child psychology.

- Traditional methods predominate, with a rigid conception of learning objectives, of reading and writing, and with a scarcity or complete lack of efficient practice in mathematics --work on this subject bears more on a symbolic than a concrete plan which is, after all, characteristic of the first grades.

- Relations between teachers and pupils tend to be authoritarian, thus preventing the development of shared affections which would help keep children in school.

- There is the mistaken concept that any kind of teachers can take the responsibility of teaching first graders.

- Infrastructures are ill-adapted to children's needs for interaction.

- Little or no use is made of didactic materials adapted to the age and context of learners.

These difficulties are even worse for vernacular-speaking children, not only because of the differences in language, but also because of the differences in cultural patterns and thinking processes.

Given the situation, it is recommended to:

- embark on change at the level of primary education with true political determination, and implement it gradually so as to avoid speculation and utopia;

- carry out an active policy of dissemination, motivation, and promotion towards parents and teachers to make them aware of the importance of early childhood education for boys and girls alike;

- consider the objectives and contents of early childhood education for 5-year olds as a stage which prepares children to learn how to read and write;

- uphold active child participation: "do and learn" with application of scientific methods (experiment and observe, handle and discover);

- select primary teachers with the help of precise criteria which take into account the applicant's professional background, and the importance of the teacher-student relationship in ensuring the child's integration and emotional development

- organize and create classroom environments adapted to the children's age to provide them with an appealing atmosphere;

- integrate into teacher-training contents related to child development, learning psychology and creativity, to provide teachers with the basic knowledge necessary for student counselling;

- help primary education teachers to overcome the weaknesses of their training as regards the development of basic preparatory activities which underly all primary education curricula. This should lead to specialization of staff who teach first grades;

- adapt first grade reading and writing achievement goals, bearing in mind that the second grade is the final step in this process. This does not mean that children are to be delayed in their start. On the contrary, it means respect for the children's own rhythm, with no backtracking to the rigid pace which entails grade repetition -- one of the evils of our educational system;

- take ethnic peculiarities into account in early childhood and primary education in rural areas. Initiation to reading and writing should, therefore, begin with the mother tongue;

- begin orally to learn a second language, writing being introduced at a later stage, once the children have mastered their mother tongue.

As mentioned earlier, another important challenge -not only for primary, but also for other levels of education- is the integration of contents related to child survival and development.

This arises from the fact that:

- Older children often take care of the younger; therefore, it is not only viable but recommended to multiply educational activities relating to child survival and development.

- School populations are in the process of behavioural change. This not only influences their habits in health, nutrition, and child-rearing throughout their lives, but may also change the behaviour of the whole family.

- In general, integrating survival themes into curricula at every level is a means to direct and focus educational systems on the more sensitive educational priorities and populations (small children under 6).

- Child survival and development activities integrated at every educational level (primary, intermediary, university) not only benefit the students' social training, but also allow organization of Youth-to-child and Child-to-child programmes.

3. Literacy and Adult Education

3.1 General Problems

In the region, governments generally agree on the need for concerted efforts to eradicate illiteracy. However, in the past ten years, the absolute number of illiterates in the region -about 44 million- has not changed, despite the fact that illiteracy rates have decreased. In fact, regional illiteracy rates decreased from 27.3% in 1970, to 17.3% in 1985, according to Unesco data. This shows that most of the region's countries are still far from achieving the second objective of the Major Project in the field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, i.e. the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000.

However, it must be noted that the phenomenon of relapse into illiteracy coupled with high rates of school drop-out (especially during the first years of schooling) reduce chances for a real decrease in illiteracy in the long run.

In every country of the region, illiteracy mainly affects rural areas, and more specifically, the female and indigenous populations.

A number of significant experiments were presented during this Seminar, concerning literacy and adult education, either by countries where UPEL projects are being implemented (Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua), or by other invited countries (Haiti, Mexico).

Among the most significant aspects highlighted in the Seminar's reports and debates were:

- the need to integrate literacy programmes into a well defined educational and global development policy for the country, one which is economically feasible, and in accordance with the needs expressed by the people;

- the need to articulate the efforts of governments with those of non-governmental organizations, and to combine formal and non-formal strategies;

- the need to base literacy and adult education on strategies of social mobilisation;

- the importance of detailed indicators for an analysis of the illiteracy situation;

- the need to confront illiteracy within the framework of all the education problems, and to concentrate efforts on strategies that take all education levels into consideration. It is in this sense that, as mentioned before, adult education must respond to indirect methods of attention to small children and to the training of polyvalent educators.

- the need to give priority to certain target populations in a long-term perspective, by giving greater attention to the young, to women, and to indigenous populations.

- the need to reformulate curriculum contents, to identify new strategies, and to adopt participatory methods.

3.2 Need for Sustained and Systematic Action

For many years now, Government policies in the region concerning education, especially literacy, have been implemented through temporary and periodic campaigns. However, the lack of systematic and sustained action, demographic growth, lack of coverage and of alternatives to school education for youngsters and small children, as well as economic and development policies -among others- are factors which have worked against the decrease of illiteracy rates.

These factors made literacy campaigns a precarious process with little impact on social and educational levels in most countries of the region. Poor transfer and inexistent evaluation of the experiences gained meant that every time another campaign was initiated, the same mistakes and failings occurred not only in design and instrumentation but also in concept and methodologies. The result of this is that after a short period of time adults are back to where they started, given the lack of continuity and of support for what was taught. This has raised false expectations and given adult little faith in this kind of services.

Today, however, there is a clearer and larger concept of what literacy means to the adult as an individual, and to the nation that implements such programmes. These are the goals to achieve:

- teaching-learning methodologies corresponding to the adults' needs and interests,

- methodologies in favour of, and in accordance with, the interaction between individuals and their social group, and with their community's social and cultural environment,

- methodologies allowing adults to consolidate their learning and its applications, and also

- methodologies contributing to appraise this process as a whole, for orientation and feedback to other adult education alternatives.

It was noted that the projects examined during this Seminar, concerning literacy and adult education, had taken account of the conceptual recommendations made in previous Unesco meetings. However, though considerable efforts have been made in developing new strategies, most of these have only just begun, and there are still no definite policies to increase coverage, nor to provide adults with continuous education.

Notwithstanding the above, a number of innovative strategies have been implemented and are today at various stages of development. Among others, the following points may be noted:

- Larger community participation.

- Literacy programmes conducted in micro-regions to ensure that they correspond to previous comprehensive analysis of the adults' environment and needs, and to guarantee the best educational quality.

- Necessity of installing systems of follow-up and evaluation.

- Impulse to generate post-literacy activities to help adults continue to learn; and

- Profit from the mistakes and successes of Spanish-speaking literacy programmes to implement differentiated literacy programmes designed for indigenous adults.

It is essential, for the transfer and systematization of experiments conducted by the countries of the region, to continue exchanging information about this type of actions, in order to optimize resources and enrich the processes. For example: concerted governmental efforts concerning the attention given to similar groups, as in the case of refugees and of cross-border indigenous populations.

3.3 Women and Literacy: Towards a Strategic Perspective

All studies concerning the problems of women's education show a direct relationship with the probability of child survival.

Studies made by the Latin American Centre for Demography (CELADE) in various countries of the region show that Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) are higher when mothers are illiterate, and decrease in reverse proportion to the mothers' level of education. This relationship is more significant than other factors, including levels of family income.

Other studies also show that IMR are still highest when women, in addition to being illiterate, have cultural and linguistic codes different from the official ones, and are -by this fact- in a situation of major discrimination. Such is the case of indigenous female populations, both in rural communities and in marginal-urban migration areas.

This explains the emphasis UNICEF gives to female education, which is one of the 7 vital measures included in the 'Child Survival and Development Revolution'. At the same time, it becomes clear that it is essential to develop scientific educational strategies for women's literacy, linked to Primary Health Care (PHC).

However, literacy programmes for women are only an emergency solution to an urgent problem. Tackling the issue from this direction leaves aside the fundamental problem -access to, and staying in, the school system for women and young girls.

In many cases, ensuring that adult women become literate and that young girls enter and stay in the school system implies significant changes in both formal and non-formal education, changes which take into account the specific problems of women.

No significant development of special didactic literacy materials for women has been observed until now, though significant progress has been made in the design of PHC-related manuals.

It is in the region's school systems that it is necessary to change the ideology underlying many pedagogic/didactic formulations as regards women's rights, and, especially, to avoid disseminating cultural patterns which restrict and condition women's roles according to long-established clichés (housewife, seamstress, and so on).

Vigorous intervention on the part of school systems against this stratification and standardization of women's role in society will represent an authentic educational revolution, which is not only desirable but also inseparable from national and social development in the region. The Nairobi Meeting on the 'International Women's Decade' made it clear that one of the best hopes for the developing world lies in achieving better integration of women into national objectives, while giving them a wider range of options.

School systems, literacy schemes, and non-formal education programmes can greatly contribute to this end, e.g. through:

- curriculum changes destined to dismantle ideological discourses and socially accepted male chauvinist patterns. Such changes must be introduced no later than during early childhood education ("everything is settled before six"), and be maintained throughout the following grades;

- practical didactic techniques which put forward all the potential options helping women in their "life goals", beyond and yet complementary to their traditional roles;

- explaining to the educational community the implications of such alternatives for the women, and the readjustments that men must endeavour to make;

- generating attitudes of respect for women, and encouraging the women's own self-respect, by a process which runs through every level of education, beginning in early education.

3.4 New Combined Strategies

In a situation of economic crisis such as that affecting the majority of the region's countries, it is necessary to have a combined formal and non-formal strategy of adult literacy. However, it must be noted that this is due not only to the scarcity of economic resources available for education, but also to the need for greater democratization of education, regarding both educational practices and management control of education itself.

In this sense, literacy is not restricted to learning how to read, write and count, it also aims at permanent education. After literacy classes, young people and adults should have the choice of either continuing with a formal school education, or with post-literacy programmes.

Passage from one system to the other -for young people and/or adults- depends not only on options and the will to have additional education, but also on the accessibility and supply of services.

The search for education alternatives to extend coverage without diminishing the quality of either formal or non-formal education led to the following suggestions:

i) Other educational agents to be drawn upon:

- From the formal system: students and teachers;
- From the community: communal leaders and volunteer agents from within the community;
- From non-governmental institutions: churches, private organizations and companies, women's organizations, unions, cooperatives, etc.

ii) Target populations to be made literate:

- groups of organized women,
- children in the streets, or working children,
- economically active population.

iii) Specific measures:

- Prevent illiteracy through expansion of early childhood education;
- Support post-literacy with such services as rural or popular libraries; non formal education programmes run by other institutions; participation as educational agent, or as programme promoter in literacy programmes for other adults;
- access to permanent adult education programmes.

iv) Reinsertion of adolescents into the formal system:

- More flexible schedules, calendars and contents; flexible methods and promotion criteria; diversification and practical work options; correspondence courses or out-of-school tutorials.

3.5 Curriculum Contents, Educational Methods and Agents

Experience made by the countries of the region show that:

- Didactic methods used are different and answer mainly needs of a practical nature. Literacy tends to be more concerned with teaching how to read and write than with basic numeracy.

- Materials vary and include use of simple forms or structured materials to initiate, consolidate, and evaluate the learning process. There are also complementary didactic materials such as loteries, illustrations, and so on...

- Curricula and methodologies used for adults and for the training of educational agents: it must be noted that predominance of children's education has, until recently, made adult education virtually non-existent. This has entailed several major problems concerning literacy.

Adult learning characteristics are little known, and this poses one of the main problems in formulating specific methods for them. This results in contents far removed from the adults' reality, and in didactic materials normally designed for other age groups and for other styles of thought. This situation entails a great deal of mechanical and unprofitable learning.

Given the existing problems and the slow development in this matter, a number of specific suggestions were made:

- Design didactic resources to learn basic numeracy in accordance with the socio-economic and cultural context of learners. It must be noted that greater functionality of formulation induces greater learner motivation and participation.

- Articulate literacy and post-literacy processes around the learner's social dynamics, either through adult activities and work, or through implementation of specific projects of community promotion, education, or primary health care.

- Give greater emphasis to the professional training of educational agents who come from the same community and who have the same economic, social, and cultural problems as the learners.

- Undertake studies to determine with greater precision how adults learn, and to have better insight into popular knowledge and systems of cultural transmission.

3.6 Continuity and Inter-sectoriality of Adult Learning

Adult education and literacy cannot be considered without taking into account the fact that there exists a national historical project for the development and promotion of all members of society. Once this development model is clearly defined, based on the participation of a national majority, then concertation between various sectors becomes feasible.

In this respect, the responsibility to teach does not rest solely with the educational sector. It is also incumbent on other sectors concerned with the larger objective of developing human resources to achieve the greater national goals.

On the other hand, educating human beings, at whatever stage of their lives, must be considered as an integral part of their personal history and take into account their past and their future.

However, this concept is not always present in the region's educational models. For example: primary curricula do not consider past experiences in early childhood education; literacy programmes do not take into account the "afterwards" of post-literacy; secondary education does not function in line with the educational history of learners; health programmes neglect the accumulated wealth of traditional medical knowledge handed down from generation to generation.

The above considerations led the Seminar to formulate the following recommendations as regards literacy and adult education:

- Literacy and adult education must be planned, not as a simple process of sharing a written code, but as a project of democratic participation and social change;

- Thus, a learner's previous cultural, ethnic and linguistic history must be preserved, along with his own forms of investigation and popular knowledge;

- In order to contribute to the training of human resources for national development, the educational system and other non-governmental educational agents must take all demands arising from other sectors into account;

- Learners must be offered a choice of inter-sectoral options which adequately combine education, health, work, and community development;

- Education for working life must be given special emphasis, in line with the development model which gives priority to the education of the young. To this end, it is recommended to endeavour to bring education, work, and economy to a point of inter-sectoral convergence;

- Strategies for inter-sectoral integration of educational projects must specify clearly what their respective institutional roles are, in order to avoid coordination problems later on;

- Simultaneous and converging strategies must be designed for literacy, universalization of primary education, and child survival programmes. Creating "liaison committees" between the various levels of education could facilitate the search for convergence and interconnection in curricula and methodologies;

- Learners arriving to the end of literacy and post-literacy processes should be offered a flexible choice of access to the formal education system.

IV. LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF UPEL PROJECTS

Notwithstanding differences in economic, socio-cultural, and political contexts, experiences acquired in the various countries which have carried out UPEL projects show a number of common tendencies and results. For a description of these projects in each country, see Annex I.

It is observed that the above mentioned tendencies present three main factors in programme formulation and in the type of actions that make up the history of UPEL these past few years:

- The policies adopted took education as a global phenomenon of development over time. UPEL projects were thus implemented as an integral educational process, with interventions at each stage and segment of the early childhood - pre-school - primary education - literacy - and adult education continuum.

- UPEL evolved into an educational action with manifold linkages, and involving various educational actors in the process: the education sector, the organizing community, and non-governmental organizations.

- Even though there is still much to do on that path, incorporating many educational actors enabled UPEL to develop combined and complementary strategies involving formal and non-formal education. This extended the educational sector's own coverage, and brought the education systems and communities much closer together.

The above principles were present in every country participating in the programme. However, they included different combinations, degrees and nuances -due to the varying stages of development of each UPEL experience-, particularly as most of them were part and parcel of national policies and development schemes.

As regards specific levels where UPEL projects operate, the following aspects may be noted:

1. Early Childhood and Pre-school Education

- Though they were not precisely defined at the beginning by Unesco and UNICEF -the two sponsoring agencies-, early childhood and pre-school education have since been acknowledged by UPEL as inseparable elements of the development of children aged 0-5. All the countries of the region have integrated them and achieved major advances in this area.

- The various child development schemes implemented by different bodies can be combined and used in complementary forms. Moreover, UPEL experiences show that work between government bodies and non-governmental organizations can be coordinated and co-exist to promote early stimulation and nutrition for children aged 0-6.

- Parent participation appears as a necessary condition for the development of pre-school programmes as much as for other educational programmes.

- The various UPEL experiments are akin in the necessity to promote stronger ties between pre-school and primary education, so that both adapt themselves to mitigate the clash that occurs between these two levels.

2. Primary Education

- UPEL experiences show that educational policies must give priority to the reduction of school drop-out and repetition ratios which have reached alarming proportions, particularly in the first two grades. Literacy rates cannot be significantly improved unless children stay in school long enough to learn how to read and write, and retain these skills for the rest of their lives. It was noted that a minimum period of schooling was necessary to acquire these abilities for life.

- The UPEL experience also shows that micro-planning and decentralization, based on small units such as micro-regions or education clusters, make it easier to extend primary education services to remote areas, while maintaining the same quality of education, and mobilizing local support.

- Strategies to improve the quality of primary education quality demand honest appraisal of the problems linked to multi-grade schools which often work with only one teacher and incomplete grades -as it frequently occurs in rural areas. UPEL experience has shown that it is possible to reach an acceptable level of education in very adverse conditions, through special training programmes for teachers, and production of educational support materials.

3. Literacy and Adult Education

- Experience shows that the greatest advances have been made by literacy programmes which stress the functionality of reading and writing, and articulate teaching with activities aimed at social transformation.

- All UPEL actions in this field have confronted the indispensable task of curbing and preventing "cultural impoverishment" in the region, through the development of literacy schemes and campaigns in mother tongues, whose contents correspond to the various communities' socio-linguistic heritage.

- At the same time, the effects of these campaigns have turned out to be temporary; it is therefore important, and necessary to have intensive post-literacy activities.

- It was observed that UPEL project efforts are concentrated in specific rural and marginal-urban areas. Given economic limitations, this seems to be the most realistic approach, as is the necessity to try out new methods step by step and through gradual implementation.

- Popular education programmes, especially for women, are not only important by themselves, but they also create conditions to dynamize and link together the three essential UPEL components: early childhood programmes, primary education, and literacy.

V. ANALYSIS OF OTHER INNOVATIONS IN THE REGION

After presentation of other innovative educational projects carried out in the region, the participants directly involved in the three UPEL projects (Bolivia, Nicaragua, Peru) were asked to comment. Particular stress was on the possible innovative features of these projects and on the manner in which they can add to UPEL experiences now under way. The comments made are summarized hereunder.

1. Early childhood education

The Brazilian project 'Pro-Crianza' was considered particularly innovative and positive as regards the inter-institutional and multi-sectoral coordination achieved, whether it be governmental or non-governmental; the mechanisms through which the Project gained massive support from the population and from politico-administrative bodies, which allowed the experiment to continue despite government changes; the unusual mobilization of all social forces in favour of child survival and development; the need to count -within this framework- not only on those who executed the project, but also on colleagues and co-participants, and finally, the gathering of cultural elements existing in the country, to produce songs, tales and other educational materials.

The Ecuador Early Childhood Education Programmes showed a capacity to face every socio-economic situation with a differentiated caretaking strategy: community centres for the children working mothers, community centres in marginal-urban areas where services for young children are lacking, itinerant child-care in rural and indigenous areas with dispersed populations, and so on; the project successfully counted on parent organizations, in each district, for taking care of the children. The selection for "Yanapac mamas" (guiding mothers) was based on 'positive deviation' indicators: that is to say, mothers who had demonstrated survival skills in critical situations -fewer child deaths, husbands at home, hygiene habits, better preparation of available food, and so on...- were chosen as promoters.

As for the Venezuela Pro-Familia Project, the participants noted a good inter-sectoral coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health; the introduction, into higher education and teacher training, of themes based on child survival and development; the massive use of communication media, and introduction of publicity spots in television programmes; finally, a strong point of the project was its emphasis on care for the mother during pregnancy and after birth, thanks to health, nutrition, and psychological orientation services.

2. Primary education

Concerning the 'Escuela Nueva' experiment in Colombia, those responsible for UPEL projects noted the answer given to single-teacher situations, based on various components: curriculum, teacher training, community promotion and administration. The duration of the experiment was noteworthy: 12 years with progressive enlargement of coverage, and improvement of services thanks to continuous evaluation. Other positive features included the creation of school governing bodies within education centres; more flexible methods of evaluation and promotion of students; permanent training of teaching staff leading to better working methods and techniques; the teacher's role changed from that of a transmitter to becoming a guide and supervisor, and from control to becoming a promoter and programme multiplier; the formulation of support materials, such as texts, exercise books, and guides answering the learners' socio-economic and cultural reality, facilitating work, enriching both staff and students' knowledge, and stimulating the teachers' creativity and self-esteem.

3. Adult literacy

The Haiti experience was unanimously approved for the integration of child survival and development contents into literacy and post-literacy materials. The salient points were: the part non-state related institutions can play (in this case, the church) in literacy actions; the significant

progress accomplished in civic education of women; the efforts made to recognize creole, and to use it in the programme; the use of audio-visual means in support of educational activities.

As for Mexico's literacy programme, the following points were noted: the importance of having created a National Institute for Adult Education (INEA); literacy is considered as a process which takes into account not only learning how to read and write, but also recreational, sports, and cultural actitivies; community participation in situational analysis; the close correlation between literacy and post-literacy services, and work-related training. This makes the education service a comprehensive and continuous venture; the use of community agents, and the transformation of neo-literates into literacy teachers make for better identification and understanding; the strengthening of vernacular languages and their use in educational programmes; the alternatives used to face the drop-out problem: group literacy, home visits, radio and television programmes; furthermore, the importance given to mathematics, and reliance on the principle of self-education which reinforces critical reflexion and self-assessment.

VI. NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE REGION: COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL MOBILIZATION, AND INTER-CULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

1. Communication and Social Mobilization*

Social communication is particularly important, for both formal and non-formal educational processes and programmes, since communication and education are interdependent functions. In this sense, communication and education may be taken as parallel, converging, and complementary processes, which aim at opening the horizon of knowledge in a society, and promoting active individual participation in social processes.

It is therefore particularly important that communication related to development policy be understood as a process with distinct stages. In order that this process be effective, it must culminate in educational action capable of producing permanent changes in a society. The various stages may be understood better by looking at the following diagram:

The social communication process

Sensitize --->	Motivate --->	Mobilize --->	Educate
Raise consciousness Explain Denounce	Promote action and strategic priorities	Unite various social sectors in a plan of action	Develop cognitive and human development conditions, internalize changes, and promote participation

* Synthesis of the main points from the reports of: Mr. Diego Etcheverria, Information Officer, UNICEF/Colombia, and Mr. Dieter Berstecher, Head of the Programme for Co-operation with UNICEF and the World Food Programme, Unesco, Paris.

The various stages or functions of this social communication process mutually reinforce one another. This is a sine qua non condition to go from one stage to the other. In this sense, where social sensitization action has been effective, it will be much easier to motivate the various social sectors through strategies and plans of action, which, in their turn, will facilitate mobilization and education.

Thus, social mobilization comes after the sensitization and motivation stages, and is highly relevant to educational processes because it helps gather resources and mobilize social sectors, giving them cohesion for specific development activities which must contain educational components if this mobilization is to be effective.

It is also essential that educational aspects, implicit and explicit in the process, must be mutually supportive to help the passage from one stage to another.

Social mobilization that does not induce sustained educational processes does not have a strong enough basis to maintain and renew itself, not to reach its objectives. In and by itself, social mobilization is a process difficult to maintain over time, given the complex organization needed to mobilize the social sectors involved. Making people aware and educating them greatly facilitates this process and helps its renewal, while at the same time strengthening the participation in educational processes.

Inter-personal communication, and the organization needed to undertake social communication activities can, and must be an essential educational resource, especially for non-formal education. In the same way, the supporting role of mass communication media must be taken into consideration, particularly in generating and transmitting educational messages concerning child development.

Social mobilization for educational purposes, as it is used in literacy campaigns, constitutes social communication of the greatest impact and of major social significance. Indeed, such campaigns may lead on to further educational processes, which can have enormous multiplier effects on other areas such as health, nutrition, sanitation, participation, and in the end, more education.

Information gathered from UPEL projects carried out in various countries and from other experiments mentioned at the Seminar bears witness to the important part played by social communication in educational processes, and to the creativity used in undertaking social communication functions. It is obvious that many education projects are now taking the above-mentioned inter-dependence of factors into consideration.

It must be noted, however, that there is still much to be done to carry out more systematic joint planning and coordinated execution of communication and education projects. This is a vital aspect that should be an integral part of every communication and education programme.

2. Inter-cultural Bilingual Education*

A reality not always fully acknowledged is the presence, in Latin America and the Caribbean, of numerous indigenous populations with their own characteristics: in many cases, the educational dimension of this reality is barely understood.

One of the main problems these indigenous populations have to face is the cultural discrimination which they experience from the rest of the society and particularly from the "official" culture.

In this sense, schools and other educational institutions play a paramount role in perpetuating and strengthening prejudices against these ethnic groups. This is expressed in education programmes destined to indigenous populations -in which acculturation and assimilation are general guiding principles-, as well as in programmes destined to Spanish-speaking sectors -where natives are usually linked to the "primitive" and the "past".

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* Synthesis of the report presented by Miss Anna Lucia d'Emilio, Unesco Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This is why, in order to bring an educational solution to this problem from a truly inter-cultural point of view, action is needed on two fronts:

- Political determination to generate educational actions which respond to indigenous problems and realities. This implies that room must be made for dialogue and interactions between these ethnic groups and national society in a democratic context of mutual acknowledgment.

- Substantial revision and modification of curricula meant for society at large, to try and project a realistic and integrated vision of the country's cultural and linguistic differences.

In this field there are very interesting and rich perspectives for the Spanish-speaking society which, in fact, is far from being linguistically and culturally homogeneous. One of education's main problems is precisely that curricula and methods are unable to reflect the socio-cultural diversity of marginal-urban and rural groups. This is why inter-cultural bilingual education programmes can make valuable contributions to the educational methodology, because of the emphasis they give to socio-cultural and linguistic differences.

As concerns bilingual education in indigenous areas, it must be pointed out that only programmes using both languages during the teaching-learning process may be considered truly bilingual. Both the proportion in which the two languages are used and the time of introduction of the official language vary in the different countries and projects of the region, and depend not only on the communities' level of bilinguism, but also on the model of reference.

Bilingual eduction basically applies either of two traditional models:

- Transition Model: the mother tongue is used in the first stages of schooling, and is gradually replaced by the official tongue by the end of the educational process.

- Maintenance Model: both languages are used throughout the educational process.

However, a number of innovative experiments endeavour to develop a third model, which consists in adapting the maintenance model to the socio-linguistic situation of Latin American indigenous languages. Emphasis is given not only to the maintenance of indigenous languages, but also to their development.

Due to centuries of acculturation, these languages have lost many of the functions attached to them, and many expressions are in disuse. They are also affected by interferences from Spanish, in vocabulary as well as in grammar and syntax.

A number of steps have been taken in this respect, through bilingual education projects which aim at developing vernaculars and standardizing languages with the elaboration of alphabets, retrieving disused terms, producing a metalanguage, and so on...

Finally, it must be noted that there is a relationship between language and culture, linguistic and thinking categories, with important consequences for the analysis of educational problems. This shows that it is necessary to have, not only bilingual education, but also inter-cultural education, so that learners can handle two distinct symbolic systems.

Therefore, the inter-cultural approach consists of orienting the teaching-learning process towards fluency in two cultural contexts, by constantly codifying and re-codifying them.

VII. SOME THOUGHTS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

1. Unesco/UNICEF Cooperation regarding UPEL Projects in the Region

UPEL was conceived in 1982 as a joint venture in which UNICEF and Unesco were to cooperate. The original approach, as defined in the basic document[1], was to make concerted efforts in the field of primary education and literacy, especially for women.

Though the practical mechanisms of cooperation at country level were not specified in the basic document, it was understood that Unesco would give technical cooperation through its regional and sub-regional offices, while UNICEF would be in charge of actual operations, through its regional area, and country offices. In practice, however, UNICEF also contributed at the technical level, especially as concerns field work at country level.

Inter-agency cooperation has generally proved to be significant and beneficial, though mechanisms of cooperation at country level may be further improved.

Three Latin American countries were chosen to participate in the UPEL programme: Peru, Nicaragua, and afterwards, Bolivia. This choice was based on a number of criteria, including: national commitment to a large-scale expansion and improvement of primary education and literacy, and the urgent need for external financial and technical support for the implementation of national programmes. Two of these countries (Peru and Bolivia) took the initiative to incorporate both formal and non-formal elements of early childhood education, given their influence on child development. It was decided, in Nicaragua, to support the country's efforts to achieve popular basic education (primary and adult education), since UNICEF was already supporting pre-school and early childhood education projects.

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(1) Moving Towards Universal Primary Education and Literacy, Unesco/UNICEF Digest 14, 1985.

While inter-agency cooperation has been fruitful it could still be more effective if Unesco's presence in the countries were more permanent, and if professional resources for the Unesco/UNICEF Cooperation Programme were increased.

In Nicaragua, it was possible, as from 1985, to conduct a joint Unesco/UNICEF/Ministry of Education programme and planning exercise at the beginning of each year, which has already yielded positive results, and which can count on the technical support of OREALC (Unesco's Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean) experts, during short periods. This was possible thanks to an agreement with the Unesco representative for Central America, in San Jose, Costa Rica. These joint programming exercises have made it easier for UPEL activities and other Unesco supported actions to complement each other.

In Bolivia, several joint seminars were held under the auspices of both the Ministry of Education, and of UNICEF/Unesco. On other occasions, UNICEF helped extend the stay of Unesco consultants, to initiate or consolidate activities, and Unesco contemplated programming by itself a number of technical missions.

In Peru, UPEL benefitted from very useful, periodic assessments made by Unesco experts, from technical and administrative monitoring, and from programme negociations between the Government of Peru, UNICEF and Unesco.

2. Suggestions for Inter-agency Cooperation

a) Strengthen communication channels, and inter-agency information exchanges.

b) Promote more joint programming activities between agencies and Ministries of Education.

c) Inform UNICEF country offices in advance on Unesco missions related to UNICEF fields of interest, to try and take advantage of experts on the spot, in order to ensure better field work coordination between the two agencies for the benefit of the country.

d) Take advantage of Unesco and UNICEF regional events to strengthen UPEL.

e) Consider the possibility of co-financing the post of a UNICEF/Unesco Coordinator at the UNICEF Regional Office in Latin America.

f) Co-finance more technical assistance in the field of education for UNICEF country offices, and the production of more technical materials in Spanish within the Unesco/UNICEF Cooperative programme.

g) It should also be possible to have mutual consultations between the two Organizations, concerning the themes and participants to Unesco sponsored regional seminars, so as to reinforce UPEL programmes and to make sure that the results, suggestions and innovations introduced during those meetings are disseminated and implemented within UPEL programmes.

3. Suggestions on UNICEF's Future Role in the Field of Education

a) Incorporate into all UNICEF-supported educational programmes in the region, the strategies and priorities recommended at the UPEL Regional Seminar, without making a distinction between 'UPEL" or "Non-UPEL" countries.

b) The Seminar's recommendations and strategies may also be taken as a basis for the formulation of UNICEF's educational policies.

c) Make UNICEF officials more aware of education's contribution to the improvement of a person's and his/her family's quality of life, and as a means to ensure - in the medium term- the internalization not only of survival strategies, but also of child development, in family behaviour.

d) Strengthen the systems of identifying and presenting educational indicators, so that they can be used as instruments to promote social mobilization directed at the educational needs and duties of women and children.

e) Increase information on educational aspects in the report on the "State of the World's Children', as support for the promotion of UPEL strategies throughout the world.

ANNEX I

PRESENT STATUS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF UPEL IN THE REGION

(Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua)

A. UPEL IN BOLIVIA

1. Primary Education

UPEL Project efforts for primary and early childhood education in Bolivia began in 1984 with the design of new plans and programmes for the rural primary school (1st-5th grades). Participants included basic primary teaching staff, curriculum experts, teachers' unions representatives, UNICEF specialists and Government representatives. This resulted in the "Plans and Programmes for 1st-5th Grades" for central schools in rural areas.

This was the first national plan for primary education curricula to be published nationwide since 1973, and UNICEF's first support for primary schools on a national - not micro-regional - scale.

These Plans gave new importance to agriculture and handicrafts, and included all health and nutrition means to support the programmes being developed by the Ministry of Health, in addition to information about sex education and child development. The contents of these plans and programmes were the basis of all subsequent curriculum reforms.

These Plans and Programmes, designed in 1984 and distributed in 1985, were destined to the 1,178 central schools offering full primary education (1st to 5th grades) with one teacher per grade, whereas most schools are multi-grade annex schools and have one teacher for several grades (there are 7,125 such schools). These schools needed a special curriculum scheme which, until UPEL was implemented, was never put into effect. A teacher's guide was created to facilitate the teachers' task, with techniques for handling multi-grade classes, and suggestions for locally made classroom furniture. All these documents were distributed all over the country in 1985.

As a complement, a series of 20 tales was

published, relating to curriculum contents, and including themes of child survival and development, sex education, and others - not only concerning women. A Teacher's Guide on the theme of sex education was also published, stressing aspects of responsible fatherhood.

In addition, subject cards for self-learning to be used individually or in groups, were prepared for eight 1st to 3rd grade subjects. These cards use nature and community as learning laboratories, and allow children to go out and make their own investigations and observations.

UNICEF and Unesco sponsored a seminar for staff of rural teacher training colleges, in order to introduce the necessary innovations in multi-grade teaching into teacher training curricula. A manual was also published for them concerning teaching practices in multi-grade schools. All the materials emphasized women's participation, and endeavoured to strengthen the cultural identity of each population group.

2. Early Childhood Education

In 1978, early education reached 4 micro-regions through early childhood education centres for which the communities - with the help of the educational sector - were responsible. Various materials stemmed from this experiment: manuals for education promoters, for children's parks, and for the construction of early education centres. This has now been extended to the 2,200 communities where the primary education reform is being completed.

In this strategy, rural teachers are considered as advisers to the community, and also as agents for the creation of integrated child care services for children 0-6 years of age. The programme includes parent education in health and nutrition, as well as cognitive, emotional, biological and psycho-motor development of small children. Child care is now provided by parents, be it in centres where working communities exist, or in families, in the case of spread-out communities.

The teacher, and one community volunteer, share the responsibility to educate parents in reproductive health (a guide and 6 manuals), and in general health (one manual), with weekly meetings and suggestions of exercises for the

children.

The key to this new approach is a self-teaching manual - "Better Health, Nutrition, and Stimulation for our Children" - which presents the development of children aged 0-6 to teachers so that they can help communities start new programmes for the integrated development of pre-school age children, give explanations on the use of support materials (reproductive health, survival, and so on), how to induce volunteers, and promoters to do communal work, to organize early childhood education centres, toy shops, use the environment, develop speech and so on.

3. Strategy for Joint Training and Supervision of Primary and Early Childhood Education

Early childhood primary education being considered part of a continuous process, training should be simultaneous.

First of all, rural supervisors of the 5 districts participating in the educational project are trained. They, in their turn, are put in charge of supervising rural 'nuclei', and of training the respective 'nucleus' directors. The latter are responsible for the training of all teachers belonging to their nucleus.

Making toys, furniture, and other educational materials is an integral part of training, as is the setting-up of early childhood education centres and multi-grade schools.

As part of their training, participants hold demonstration classes on preventive health, reproductive health education, at two levels: the primary school, and in the form of community extension work.

4. Literacy

The National Literacy and Popular Education Plan results from extensive participation, and sums up over 300 years of experience.

The National Literacy and Popular Education Service (SENALEP), which implements the National Plan, was created

in 1983 as a decentralized, independently managed body, dependent of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Its main functions are:

- Planning and execution of the National Literacy and Popular Education Plan.

- Planning and execution of programmes and projects in education, post-literacy, training, and other fields in a context of permanent education.

- Encourage the participation of popular organizations in educational actions directed towards sectors not covered by the formal system.

- Co-ordinate with governmental and non-governmental organizations in adult education and literacy.

The National Literacy and Popular Education Plan is based on the following principles and strategies:

- Illiteracy must be considered to be not only the inability to read or write a number of graphic symbols, but also, essentially, the inability to understand one's own history, to communicate with the majority, to understand the present or what it means to live in a democracy.

- No educational action is politically neutral. Therefore the Plan is a privileged educational basis for the appropriation and consolidation of the democratic process.

- Oral and written educational messages are communicated in the mother tongue, and literacy must be bilingual.

- Begin programming from the base, in order that the group organize itself, suggest means, or apply a common stand to the immediate challenges that must be faced, based on the community's levels of consciousness and identity.

- Combined use of various means to open channels of expression for organized popular movements.

- Inter-sectoral co-ordination to use educational actions in the interest of production, improvement

of health, nutrition and general sanitation.

Educational agents are the above-mentioned popular educators (promoters, teachers, leaders, and so on...) who are particularly qualified to establish horizontal relationships between men confronted with the same reality.

The following data sum up the main SENALEP achievements: training of 7,571 popular educators, 2,767 of whom are operational; elaboration of materials (subject cards, exercise sheets and books, literacy learner's guide) in 5 modalities respecting regional ethnic characteristics of the country, and 59,701 persons who learned to read and write - 70% of whom were women. One of the national successes was that Quechua and Aymara idioms were officially recognized, and that a single alphabet was approved for the elaboration of educational texts at every level.

As regards difficulties, those due to limitations of financial and human resources, and to socio-political changes, must be mentioned. The national plan came at a time of social growth, and thus created great expectations which, because of the first two limitations, could not be met on a national scale. This provokes frustrations, particularly in rural areas. Also, follow-up and evaluation which would have allowed experiences to be systemized, and the true number of enrolments, and drop-outs to be known, have been lacking. The rhythm of activities, intensive as it is, did not leave room for reflection. Today, there is a political will to continue with the National Plan since the Plan's essence is of a national character that goes beyond political parties and governments, emphasizing the fact that education, culture, and languages are basic rights of men and peoples.

5. Other Literacy Programmes: The 'Centre for Self-Managed Development' and its Women's Education Groups

The Centre for Self-Managed Development (C.D.A.) is a non-governmental organization which designs, plans, and directs massive popular education programmes for primary health care and for community development. It works in La Paz's popular districts and in 60 peasant communities in the metropolitan sub-urban sector. It is co-ordinated

at state level by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Health.

The C.D.A. relies on its own basic organizations - the Women's Education Nuclei (NEF) - to carry out its work. Today, there are 76 NEFs, with about 12,000 women who live in critical conditions of poverty, coming from families of miners, peasants, factory workers, housemaids, and domestic employees.

The C.D.A. develops the following activities through these NEFs:

- Functional literacy and education of women;
- Training in Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT);
- Popular communication, mobilization and participation in the Extended Immunization Programme;
- Popular education for the programme of Child Growth Monitoring.
- Encourage breast-feeding;
- Education regarding nutrition and food supplements for pregnant women and for infants;
- Encourage community development through self-managed actions destined to answer basic population needs (hygiene, provision of sanitary services).

This experiment is still under way. However, some achievements can be noted, as in the case of 10,000 women who were taught how to read and write by 2,000 NEF voluntary literacy workers. NEFs also participated directly in two vaccination campaigns, and considerably increased immunization coverage through local popular communication and mobilization campaigns. Thus all health sector programmes were strengthened, and thanks to the environmental sanitation campaign, 105 refuse dumps were cleaned out. Under the "One Child, One Tree" motto, 15,000 trees were planted in La Paz by 15,000 children of NEF women.

Notwithstanding these achievements, the C.D.A. is aware of such risks as:

- NEFs are new structures, and as such benefit from initial enthusiasm. Promotion must be maintained over a long period if it is to be sustained, and if its power of mobilization is to be preserved.

- The urgent need to introduce economic income generation projects is up against the deep recession crisis faced by the country - an obstacle of unusual proportion.

- Given their capacity for organization, and their immense mobilization power, NEFs are greatly coveted by political parties. Fortunately, they have preserved their independence until now, but the risk remains. Only if these problems are adequately resolved, will there be continuity and success for future NEFs.

B. UPEL IN PERU

1. Activities

UPEL strategy in Peru took the form of an Intensive Action Programme in Rural and Marginal-Urban Communities (PAICRUM). The development of this programme was erratic during the first three years, because of the country's social dynamics. As the government changed, new education policies were determined in the context of a social policy aimed at giving attention to the poorest sectors.

This meant that PAICRUM had to be completely redefined, not only in terms of concept, means of action and setting of priorities, but also in terms of changing target populations and new territorial focus.

To do this, the government delayed PAICRUM actions in order to reconsider them, for indeed, it was a unique opportunity to put into practice innovative experiments in "Education for Life" in the most backward places of the country.

This new programme conception led to multiplying

the project areas, thus increasing operational capacities and increasing the scope for participation by organized communities.

PAICRUM thus turned from a programme of assistance in basic services derived from experimental diagnosis, into a programme for integrated educational services (early childhood and primary education, functional literacy, and communal promotion and education), in accordance with local and micro-regional plans, which were the product of progressive state decentralization.

PAICRUM's new orientation began in 1986. This is why today there are yet no significant achievements as regards impact and direct benefits. In the first place, the programme is concerned with dissemination, with motivation of recipient communities, with the elaboration of basic documents for the implementation of each component, and also with the readjustment of the national education project.

It is important, however, to note that progress has been achieved in the implementation of non-conventional innovative experiments at certain levels of technical training and in organized communities. One of the major obstacles is the lack of experience and of sufficient information about participatory techniques and methods within technical training projects.

For the time being, the following conclusions may be drawn from summing up PAICRUM intervention strategies, achievements, and difficulties:

2. Community Promotion and Education

Their aim is to encourage organized communities and sectors to formulate, implement, and evaluate local and micro-regional development plans, starting from the identification of their interests, needs, and resources.

Achievements

The setting up of local Education Committees which elaborated - with the help of the organized community, and using action-participation research - situation analysis,

determined priority needs and developed working schemes. These were integrated into a number of micro-regional plans.

Difficulties

Lack of human resources specialized in participatory research techniques.

3. Education of Women

Early childhood education, literacy and community education were integrated through organized women's groups.

Achievements

- Elaboration of curricula and of evaluation tools for the training of 126 women's groups.
- Training of 42 co-ordinating teachers.
- A study of women's participation in production activities was started.

Difficulties

- Lack of education policies, and a clear idea of integrated services based on concrete experiences.
- Lack of contents referring to adult education and to participatory techniques in the training of early childhood education teachers.
- Qualified staff desert because of work insecurity, and administrative obstacles.

4. Centres of Information Resources for Life

Centres of Information Resources for Life (CRIV) are locally organized with the participation of the community.

Achievements

- Formulation of documents and proposals for the

organization and working of CRIVs.

- Sensitizing communities to CRIV objectives and final aims, and the importance of choosing those in charge of operations.

5. Early Childhood and Primary Education

Overall objective: the modification of primary education curricula to correspond to the children's needs and interests, as well as to their socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic environment.

Achievements

The elaboration of a common core of objectives and contents which at grade one, are closely linked to the themes taken up by early childhood education curricula, and initial qualification of 500 teachers.

Difficulties

Resistance on the part of primary education teachers, and limited resources for active work with the children.

High percentage of unqualified primary education teachers, and lack of technical staff who can speak vernacular.

6. Literacy

Fundamentally, this component aims at teaching working women how to read and write, in line with their needs and interests, and with the characteristics of their region.

Achievements

Implementation of literacy programmes integrated with early childhood education programmes in organized groups of women, in a number of regions.

Elaboration of texts and guides containing themes

from everyday life, work, production, and childcare.

Difficulties

Lack of studies and of potential development in the various native languages.

Difficulties in linking up adult education methodologies with the various languages.

Finally, it must be noted that the two international agencies - UNICEF and Unesco - participated through:

- consultant services provided by two Unesco specialists.
- permanent presence and support on the part of the UNICEF office at every stage. Their contribution was helpful technically, administratively, and in negociations.

C. UPEL IN NICARAGUA

"Fighting to Achieve Popular Basic Education within the Scope of the UPEL Project"

1. The Country's Socio-Economic Context

Nicaragua is a small country (130,000 km^2, and approximately 3 million inhabitants), with all the limitations inherent to all Latin American countries. However, it is determined to overcome all obstacles to the right of its people to live in peace, and to build its own economic, social, political and cultural model.

The state of war resulted in imposing a survival economy. This means preserving what was achieved, and advancing despite all difficulties. This situation led the Revolutionary Government to develop strategies to meet local needs within the national context.

2. The Education System We are Building

The educational project of the Sandinista Popular

Revolution is rooted in the F.S.L.N. Historic Programme which materialized after the triumph of revolution, with the participation of the Revolutionary Government, and the population at large.

The Ministry of Education based its working policy on:

- More education (expansion)
- Better education (improvement)
- New education (transformation)

3. Fighting to Achieve Popular Basic Education

Popular basic education is the most important medium and long-term project of the Revolution. It began in 1980, immediately after the National Literacy Crusade.

Objectives:

- Guarantee basic education (1st through 4th grade) to the whole Nicaraguan population.
- Offer basic education to enable Nicaraguans not only to read and write, but also to enter productive work efficiently.
- Suppress the high repeating and drop-out ratios, and raise the low promotion rates.
- Overcome the problem of students too-old.
- Establish the structural basis of basic general education.

From 1983 onwards, the national educational strategy was put into practice by specific activities supported by UNICEF/Unesco through the project: Support for the Fight to Achieve Popular Basic Education, within the scope of UPEL projects.

4. Project Components

Priority was given from the beginning to the rural sector, through multi-grade education.

Since 1985, the strategy is based on the following components:

(a) **Educational Micro-Planning**

Educational micro-planning fills a vital function within the educational system by identifying needs, and formulating answers with specific measures and resources.

Achievements:

- Formulation of a socio-educational diagnosis that made it possible to elaborate methodological outlines for the generalization of this experiment.
- Qualification of basic technical cadres for project elaboration and follow-up.
- Qualification of higher cadres for the regionalization of projects and decentralization.
- Obtaining methodological contents and elements to adapt curricula to the needs and interests of the community.
- Generalization of popular participation.

(b) **Curriculum Development**

Achievements:

- Definition of curriculum designs for basic education (1st through 4th grade), and for teacher training.
- Investigations and experiments which led to the elaboration of curriculum materials from the very first level.
- Formulation of profiles concerning primary teachers and 4th-grade pupils.
- Outline of participative methodology for the development of curricula in rural communities (Integral Learning Units).

(c) **Training**

Achievements

- Organization and setting-up of training and supervision networks, derived from a new approach whose key element is the analysis of the real situation (action-reflection-action).

- Design of an action training programme, in decentralized form.

(d) **Literacy**

- Eradicate illiteracy thanks to a national strategy based on the decentralization of literacy field projects, in order to conceive and implement permanent popular education.

- Participatory research to determine curriculum materials.

5. Perspectives

- National education development strategy for rural areas.

- National literacy and popular adult education strategy.

- National curriculum transformation strategy.

- National teacher training strategy.

- National administrative decentralization strategy.

ANNEX II

DECLARATION OF SUCRE

"Answering the Challenge of Human Resource Development in Latin America and the Caribbean"

We, the participants of the "Regional Seminar for the Universalization of Primary Education and Literacy", coming from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela, jointly with Dr. Enrique Ipina Melgar -Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Bolivia-, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), meeting to appraise progress and future prospects of programmes under implementation in the region, concerning early childhood education, universal primary education and literacy, and to analyze new, innovative alternatives destined to improve living conditions,

Acknowledge that:

1) In our countries, the crisis induced by economic recession and external debt increases poverty while reducing the countries' capacity for investment in social sectors, especially education and health.

2) In every country of the region, worsening living conditions have a major impact on the more vulnerable and poor populations. Among them, those most at risk are:

   - children under 6, and women,
   - school-age children, particularly in rural and marginal urban areas,
   - indigenous majority and minority groups.

3) Such detrimental conditions mean irretrievable loss of human potential, thus affecting the development of our countries.

4) These consequences can already be observed in the education sector, given the high percentages of school drop-outs and repeaters in primary education, and the persistence of illiteracy in absolute terms.

5) Human development sciences have shown how essential a child's first six years are, not only for its survival, but also for the development of a human being's basic mental, social, and emotional potential; and that nutritional and environmental deficiencies produce irreversible damage.

6) More than any other sector, educational systems have the greatest potential of penetration and achievement -given the human resources and infrastructures they can count on-; and though they may not achieve perfect coverage, their capacity to bring about action for human development, jointly with other sectors, is far from being fully utilized.

7) Investments in early childhood and primary education have proven to be most profitable economically, most important pedagogically, and most redistributive in social terms.

8) Scientifically, a strong inverse correlation has been observed between the mothers' level of education and the children's mortality and morbidity rates.

9) Countries of the region have a long way to go in search of comprehensive means to ensure child care for children under six years of age, and of innovative strategies in primary education and literacy. By gaining experience, these programmes may become effective and economically viable answers to the crisis.

Recommend that:

1) As a matter of urgency, educational systems give political priority, and orient their investments towards early childhood education programmes (health, nutrition, and child development), as well as universalization of primary education and literacy.

2) Formal and non-formal education systems develop innovative and creative strategies which incorporate the theme of survival and development for children and women into every level and mode of education. Educational curricula will thus be socially more relevant, responsive to urgent social needs, and directed towards the more vulnerable populations.

3) Programmes of primary education and literacy, and those serving child survival and development must follow simultaneous, integrated, and converging strategies.

4) In rural and marginal urban areas, efforts to give attention to children under 6 and to women must be promoted and encouraged through non-formal programmes for child survival and development which use various forms of community participation.

5) Programmes for marginal groups must pay special attention to cultural peculiarities related to the family, to child-rearing practices, and more generally, to socio-cultural and socio-linguistic variables.

6) In view of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America, cultural and linguistic features of those groups which make up national society must be analyzed, not only to allow more adequate educational attention, but also to redeem, promote, and strengthen the indigenous culture of each country.

7) In implementing policies of child survival and development, and especially in formal and non-formal education, popular participation strategies must be developed with intersectoral support, bringing into play other educational agents in the community, and using strategies of communication and social mobilization.

Request that:

Governments of the region:

1) Give a maximum of attention to health and education problems, particularly for children under 6 years of age, and invest the resources which are required to effectively recuperate the human capital that is endangered today because of the crisis.

2) Refrain from making the economic adjustments necessary to face the consequences of international economic recession and the region's crisis -due to the charge of servicing external debt- to the detriment of quality and coverage in their health and education services.

UNICEF, Unesco, International Agencies, and other institutions:

Coordinate their action to pursue the recommendations we subscribe to, and increase their technical and financial cooperation.

Sucre, May 10th, 1987

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